DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 362 976 EA 025 343

AUTHOR Ziobrowski, Eileen Merriam; Newman, Dianna L.
TITLE Teacher Perceptions of Program Evaluation: Opportunities in Shared Decision Making.
PUB DATE Apr 93
NOTE 10p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Atlanta, GA, April 12-16, 1993).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Decision Making; Elementary Secondary Education; *Participative Decision Making; *Program Evaluation; School Involvement; *Teacher Influence; *Teacher Participation; *Teacher Role
IDENTIFIERS *New York

ABSTRACT

This paper presents findings of a study that examined teachers' perceptions of opportunities for and their willingness to participate in decision making regarding program evaluation. Questionnaires were mailed to a random sample of 477 K-12 teachers in the New York public school system, eliciting an unspecified number of responses. Overall, teachers indicated that they had limited involvement in program evaluation, but would like to be more involved, especially in decisions related to evaluation design and use. Teachers perceived the most opportunity for involvement in program evaluation to be in developing plans for implementation; they identified the lowest area of opportunity as deciding what information should be directed to various audiences. Decisions that involved making recommendations constituted the most preferred area of involvement; the least preferred was identification of constraints on the evaluation. An implication is that evaluators should recognize that teachers feel disenfranchised from the evaluation process and that efforts to include teachers in decision making should be developed and encouraged. Two tables are included. (LMI)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 362 976

Teacher Perceptions of Program Evaluation: Opportunities in Shared Decision Making

Eileen Merriam Ziobrowski
Dianna L. Newman

University at Albany/SUNY

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

E. M. Ziobrowski

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

Address Correspondence to:

Dianna L. Newman
Ed313A
University at Albany/SUNY
Albany, New York 12222

A paper presented at the 1993 Annual Conference of the American Educational Research Association
Atlanta, Georgia

EA 025 343

Teacher Perceptions of Program Evaluation: Opportunities in Shared Decision Making

Eileen Merriam Ziobrowski
Dianna L. Newman

University at Albany/SUNY

Background of the Study

Involving teachers as stakeholders in program evaluation has long been thought to enhance evaluation's capacity to generate information-based change in school planning and policy development (Archbald & Newmann, 1988; Tuckman, 1985; King & Pechman, 1983; Wolf, 1979). Research, however, indicates that teachers have negative views of evaluation and see it as a "necessary evil" (David, 1981; Stufflebeam and Welch, 1986). This has led to the conclusion that teachers' viewpoints affect and frequently result in under-utilization of the evaluation process and evaluation results (King & Thompson, 1983; Williams & Banks, 1981). As a consequence, models of evaluation in education have begun to include the need to involve teachers in program evaluation processes in their schools (Alkin, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

Stakeholder based evaluation calls for involving individuals who "have something at stake in the evaluand in determining how an evaluation is to be focused, what information is to be collected, and how interpretations of the evaluation are to be made" (Lincoln & Guba, 1990). This involvement can be equated with a shared decision making process (Greene, 1988). Both shared decision making and stakeholder based evaluation models promote the involvement of individuals in decisions in that will directly affect them. Both

propose that this involvement will yield: 1) better decision, 2) greater commitment to decisions, and 3) political/social empowerment of the individuals (Greene, 1988; Whitmore, 1988; Lincoln & Guba, 1990). Theorists and practitioners agree on what "should be happening"; however, there is very little research on what "really is happening". While research does indicate that teacher involvement in decision making in evaluation is an important factor in ensuring desired outcomes, very little is known about teachers' true participation in evaluation decision making or their desire to be involved in decision making.

At this time, many states, including New York, are mandating that schools implement shared decision making procedures; one suggested area of implementation is program evaluation. No specific directions or procedures exist, however, on how this implementation is to take place. No information is available to guide administrators, program planners and evaluators on how, or if, shared decision making will impact program evaluation.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate teacher perceptions of opportunities for and willingness to participate in decision making in program evaluation. Perceptions of opportunity and willingness were examined in two ways: 1) the actual level of opportunity to be involved and 2) the level at which teachers desire to be involved. "Decision making" in program evaluation was operationalized to mean the actual decisions which are made related to the 1) design, 2) implementation and 3) use of program evaluation. "Involvement in decision making" refers to the type of participation. For the

purposes of this study, assessment of involvement used a continuum developed by Conway (1984) which delineated level of participation as ranging from "no involvement" through "shared the decision making with administrators".

Methodology

Sample. The subjects for this study consisted of 477 teachers, randomly selected from the membership list of a major state teachers union. All respondents were certified to teach in the state of New York and were currently employed in K-12 public school systems. Examination of the demographics (gender, education and certification levels) indicated that the respondents were representative of New York state and national teaching populations.

Instrumentation. A mail-out mail-back survey, composed of two sections, was used to assess teachers' perceptions of program evaluation as it related to shared decision making. The first section measured teachers' perceptions of current opportunities to be involved in decisions pertaining to program evaluation. For this section, Likert-type stems were developed that identified eighteen decision situations in which teachers could be involved when program evaluations were conducted. Six of the stems represented design decisions, six represented evaluation process decisions and six represented evaluation recommendation/use decisions. For each decision setting, respondents were asked to indicate their perception of the degree of opportunity found for current involvement for their district using a four point scale ranging from "no involvement" to "making the decision jointly with the administrator". The second section of the survey utilized the same eighteen items but asked

respondents to indicate their preferred level of involvement using the same four point scale ranging from "no involvement" to "making the decisions jointly with administrators". Development and validation of the eighteen stems included a survey and follow-up interviews of a representative national sample of Directors of Evaluation for school districts, educational administrators, teachers involved in the implementation of shared decision making, and theorists in evaluation. Coefficient alpha reliability for the two scales was greater than .90.

Results

A series of descriptive and empirical analyses were used to examine the data. Repeated measures analysis of variance, using mean responses as the dependent variable, indicated significant differences between responses on opportunities for involvement and desire to be involved in shared decision making in evaluation. Significant differences were also found among the thee types of evaluation decisions. Examination of the means (Tables 1 and 2) indicated that teachers perceived the most opportunity for involvement in evaluation decision making to be in developing plans for implementing recommendations; the lowest area of current opportunity was in deciding what information should go to various audiences. The most preferred area of involvement represented decisions that involved making recommendations; the least preferred area of involvement was identification of constraints on the evaluation. Overall, teachers indicated that they currently had only limited involvement in shared decision making related to program evaluation, that they were either not involved or only asked to supply information. Teachers did indicate, however, that they would like to be more involved in decisions related to program evaluation, especially decisions related

to design and use. In these areas, teachers indicated that they would like to provide information and be part of the decision team.

Conclusions and Implications

The findings of this study indicate that the philosophy of shared decision making, as implemented in many K-12 educational settings, will have an impact on the design, process and use of program evaluation. While many settings have not yet included program evaluation decisions as one of the areas for shared decision making, the stake-holder based approach to evaluation is a fore runner to this inclusion. The results of this study indicate that teachers have limited involvement in program evaluation, but would like to have more, especially in the areas of design and use.

The results of this study have implications for school evaluators, educational administrators, and teachers working toward the implementation of shared decision making. Evaluators need to be aware of the fact that, despite the increased use of stake-holder models of evaluation, teachers feel disenfranchised from the evaluation process. If evaluation results are to be meaningful and to be useful to administrators, teachers and students, efforts to involve teachers in decision making should be developed and encouraged.

References

Alkin, M. C. (1990). Debates on Evaluation. Sage Publications, Newbury Park, CA.

Conway, J. A. (1976) Test of linearity between teachers' participation in decision making and their perceptions of their schools as organizations. Administrative Science Quarterly, 21, 130-139.

David, J. L. (1981). Local use of Title I evaluations. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 3, 27-39.

Greene, J. C. (1988) Stakeholder participation and utilization in program evaluation. Evaluation Review, 12, 91-116.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1989). Fourth Generation Evaluation. Sage Publications, Newbury Park CA.

King, J. A. & Pechman, E. M. (1983). Collaborative program improvement: A mechanism for site-based change in middle-grade schools. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.

King, J. A., & Thompson, B. (1983) Research on school use of program evaluation: A literature review and research agenda. Studies in Educational Evaluation, 9, 5-21.

Stufflebeam, D. L., & Welch, W. L. (1986). Review of research on program evaluation in United States' school districts. Educational Administration Quarterly, 22, 150-170.

Tuckman, B. W. (1985). Evaluating Instructional Programs. Boston, MA, Allyn & Bacon.

Whitmore, E. (1988). Evaluation as empowerment and the evaluator as enabler. Doctoral Dissertation, Cornell University. ERIC Document Reproduction Number 296877.

Williams, R. C., & Banks, A. (1984) Assessing information differences in two districts: The search for impact. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 6, 267-282.

Wolf, R. L. (1973). How teachers feel toward evaluation. In House, E. R., School Evaluation: The Politics & Process. Berkeley, CA, McCutchan Publishing, 156-168.

Table 1

Current Opportunity for Involvement in Evaluation Decisions Ranked by Item Means

Item	X	sd
Design Decisions		
Defining measurable outcomes/goals of programs to be evaluated	2.076	1.106
Determining key questions or issues to address in evaluating programs	2.017	1.081
Deciding when programs need to be evaluated	1.956	1.045
Identifying necessary resources (equipment, facilities) for program evaluation to take place	1.948	1.049
Determining the best evaluation design for a program	1.890	1.058
Deciding who conducts program evaluation	1.765	0.975
Process Decisions		
Deciding ways to measure program implementation and outcomes (e.g., questionnaires, observation tools, surveys, interviews, tests, etc.)	1.933	1.098
Developing questions/content to be included in measures	1.926	1.095
Deciding when, where, and how data will be collected	1.813	1.057
Deciding how data will be analyzed	1.726	1.030
Deciding who/what will be sampled	1.683	0.985
Identifying constraints to program evaluation	1.679	0.914
Use Decisions		
Developing plans for implementing recommendations	2.128	1.120
Developing recommendations after reviewing evaluation results	2.118	1.096
Determining if program objectives have been achieved	2.114	1.074
Deciding what groups will get evaluation results (staff, parents, board members, community)	1.723	1.005
Deciding how to present evaluation results to different groups	1.688	1.012
Deciding what information different groups will get	1.670	0.964

Table 2

Preferred opportunity for Involvement in Evaluation Decisions
Ranked by Item Means

Item	X	sd
Design Decisions		
Deciding when programs need to be evaluated	3.669	0.577
Determining key questions or issues to address in evaluating programs	3.650	0.619
Defining measurable outcomes/goals of programs to be evaluated	3.648	0.621
Determining the best evaluation design for a program	3.605	0.685
Deciding who conducts program evaluation	3.584	0.656
Identifying necessary resources (equipment, facilities) for program evaluation to take place	3.519	0.731
Process Decisions		
Deciding ways to measure program implementation and outcomes (e.g., questionnaires, observation tools, surveys, interviews, tests, etc.)	3.593	0.658
Developing questions/content to be included in measures	3.576	0.681
Deciding who/what will be sampled (e.g., which students will be tested, which classrooms will be observed, which teachers will be interviewed)	3.572	0.701
Deciding when, where, and how data will be collected	3.479	0.784
Deciding how data will be analyzed	3.451	0.807
Identifying constraints to program evaluation (funding, political, legal, ethical)	3.339	0.843
Use decisions		
Developing recommendations after reviewing evaluation results	3.712	0.579
Determining if program objectives have been achieved	3.681	0.612
Developing plans for implementing recommendations	3.680	0.624
Deciding what groups will get evaluation results (staff, parents, board members, community)	3.557	0.715
Deciding what information different groups will get	3.523	0.743
Deciding how to present evaluation results to different groups	3.476	0.775